
City of Minneapolis 2012-2013 Digital Equity Pilot Program

*Financial Stabilization and Employment Placement Assistance
with Technology Access*

Program Summary Outcomes, Successes and Lessons Learned

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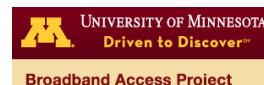


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Program Overview

The 2012 – 2013 City of Minneapolis Digital Equity pilot program was developed in May 2012 and launched on August 9, 2012. Staff from the City and Build Wealth Minnesota created the program along with several other partners. The program is intended to bridge the digital divide and address the racial employment gap in Minneapolis by integrating digital literacy training and desktop computers with one year of Internet access at home with financial literacy training through Build Wealth Minnesota's Family Stabilization program. The Family Stabilization Program is a comprehensive financial education and counseling program that provides participants with a combination of classroom training, financial coaching, and one-on-one case management.

The Digital Equity pilot program was established for ten families to fully engage in this new integrated model where they could use technology toward reaching their financial and employment goals. In addition to training and coaching, having a computer with Internet at home provides increased access to the Build Wealth budgeting system, and a consistent, convenient way to access online employment opportunities, manage finances, communicate with coaches, track progress and achieve a variety of personal goals.

One of the primary objectives of the pilot was to gather feedback from the partners and the families on what worked well and what can be improved, and to see how the model could be expanded to larger groups. The value of the integrated model is that the technology training and tools can support families who are already engaged in existing community programs, and can build on these established relationships to achieve a greater impact.

Summary of Outcomes

The success measures for the program focused on employment, financial literacy, digital literacy and maintaining Internet access at home. We gathered feedback from the participants in October 2012 (12 weeks after the program started) and in August, 2013 at the end of the program.

Participant Feedback

What was your favorite part of the program?

- *How quickly they came to activate the Internet (USI Wireless); their courtesy, and how they worked to get the signal into my home. I was amazed at the quick and professional service.*
- *I liked the classes provided at the University of Minnesota. I have some background at my job, but I was able to sharpen skills, and I felt comfortable asking questions.*
- *The partnership with Build Wealth. I like the opportunity for participants to give feedback as a team.*
- *I went from being a renter to an owner, now I have a computer – thank you.*

Overall, participants were happy with the program and many of their goals were met.

- The majority of respondents (83%) reported that having a computer and Internet at home made a difference in their employment situation.
- Over 80% of respondents reported that the program helped them with their financial goals.
- All of the program participants plan to maintain Internet service at home within their own family budget; however they chose to switch to a higher speed service. This is a major success of the pilot, given that none of the participants had Internet at home at the beginning of the program.
- Comfort level with a variety of computer and Internet skills either stayed the same at “Very comfortable” or improved for each skill area.

Program Components

Participant Identification / Eligibility

- Engaged in Build Wealth Family Stabilization Program
- Live in Minneapolis
- Unemployed / underemployed
- Actively / aggressively seeking employment
- Don't have computer/Internet at home
- Live in a residence capable to connect with USIW Internet service (not above 3rd story).
- Commitment to complete computer training classes

Build Wealth Minnesota Family Stabilization Program

- Coordinate and follow up with Digital Equity participants
- Financial literacy and coaching
- Budgeting and asset building strategies
- Credit awareness training
- Credit builder loans
- Affordable housing
- Down payment assistance
- Resource alignment – connections with employment and entrepreneurial support

Computers and Internet

- Computers and technical support from PCs for People
- 12 months of Internet service from Wireless Minneapolis / USI Wireless Community Benefits
- USI Wireless provided discounted modems and installation services
- City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development provided funding assistance

Training

- Digital literacy skills classes and Northstar Digital Literacy Assessments provided by the University of Minnesota Broadband Access Project
- Employment tools provided by the Minnesota WorkForce Center-North Minneapolis

City of Minneapolis

- Program framework and project management
- Funding assistance from Community Planning and Economic Development

Success Measures and Outcomes

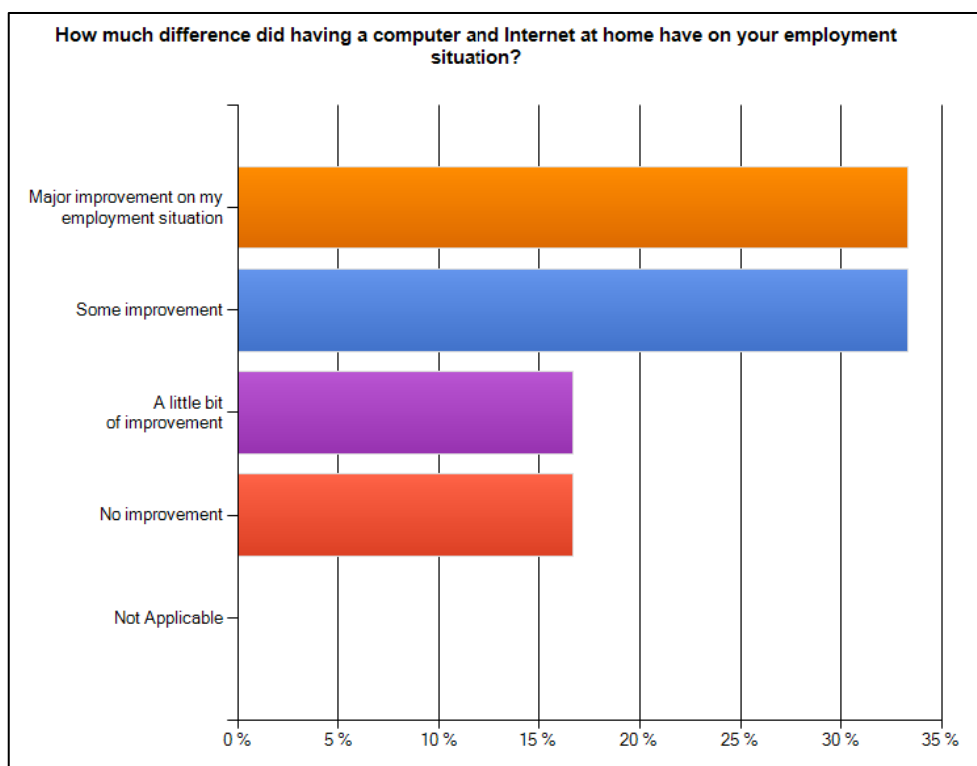
Feedback and data was collected from the participants during a focus group in October 2012 and through a year-end survey conducted in July and August 2013.

- Eight out of the ten participants provided written feedback during the October focus group;
- Six out of the ten participants completed the year-end survey.

Employment and Financial Literacy Goals

Success measures in the employment and financial literacy categories were:

- If unemployed, were you able to get a job, and if so, did having a computer at home help you get a job?
- Did the program help you find a better job?
- Did the program help you do better at your current job?
- Did the program help you manage your income (personal finances, succeed in Build Wealth program goals)?

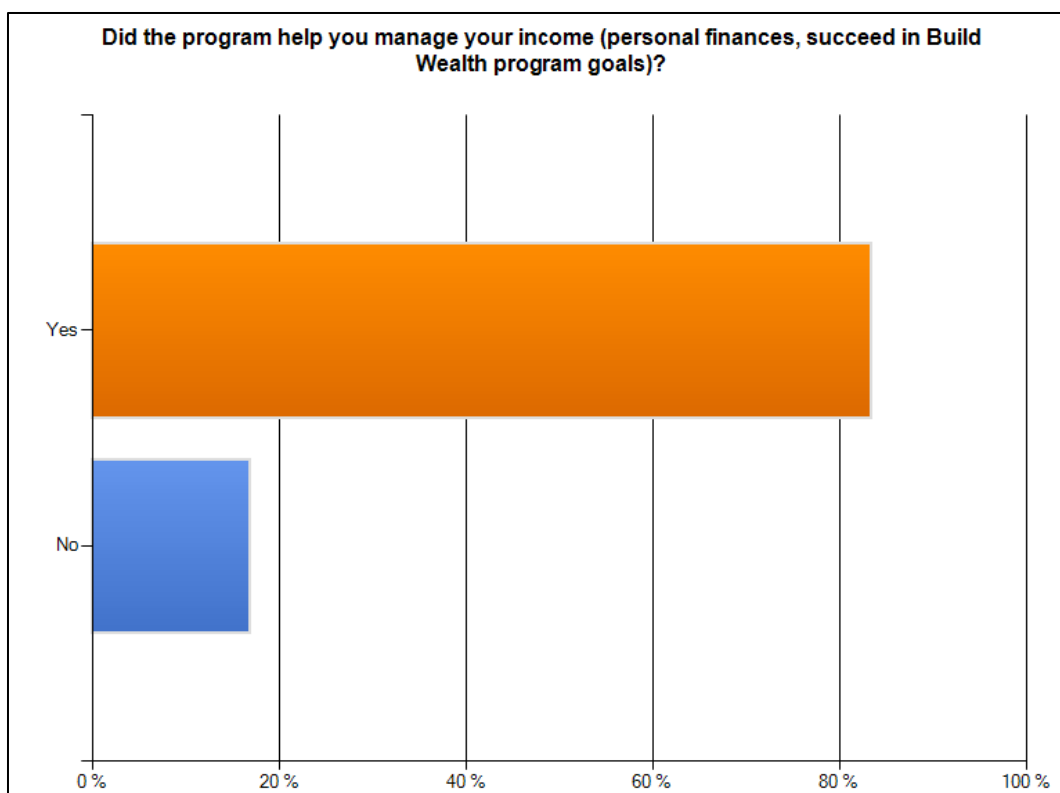


The majority of respondents (83%) reported that having a computer and Internet at home made a difference in their employment situation.

Participant Feedback

How did having training and access at home impact your employment situation?

- *Helped me get the job I start on Monday*
- *Got me a job I really needed*
- *Before taking the classes, I had to have my 8 year old help me. I don't have to depend on him now.*
- *I'm starting my own business – it helps with the finances.*
- *Improved my knowledge base for my job*
- *The training showed me where to go for jobs online and how to do applications.*
- *Provided more options on where to find work, and made it much easier to contact employers.*
- *I learned computer skills for employment and got help with the Social Security website*
- *I learned about how computers work, and the options so I can address an issue myself*
- *I'm starting to get used to using my phone now too.*



Over 80% of respondents reported that the program helped them with their financial goals.

The Build Wealth Family Stabilization Program includes the following financial management training and support components:

- 12 weeks of financial education covering 36 hours of training.
- Each family creates an action plan with their coach to document their commitments to specific program benchmarks and personal development goals.
- One-on-one case management: at each coaching session, participants review their goals and progress in the following areas: Housing, employment, salary, education, credit, savings, budgeting, and transportation.
- Online Budgeting System: Families create a budget which they can track online. They reconcile their budget monthly against their actual expenditures over several months. This process helps them evaluate and maintain effective spending patterns to meet their goals.

Digital Literacy and Internet Access Outcomes

Success measures in this area were:

- Did the program increase your computer / digital literacy skills?
- How will you apply the technology and skills toward your goals?
- Are you able to maintain Internet service at home after 12 months of USIW service?

100% will maintain Internet service at home: All of the program participants plan to maintain Internet service at home. **This is a major success of the pilot, given that none of the participants had Internet at home at the beginning of the program.**

Digital Literacy Training

- Feedback on the training from the University of Minnesota Broadband Access Project was very positive
- Training courses included: Computer and email basics, Computer Maintenance, Microsoft Word and Excel, Resume Writing, and Online Job Search.
- Except for Computer Maintenance, the classes were well attended. Sometimes 1-3 people were unable to attend.

Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment

The program used the Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment as a tool for trainers to get a sense of the digital literacy skill levels of the participants and a way for participants to demonstrate success.

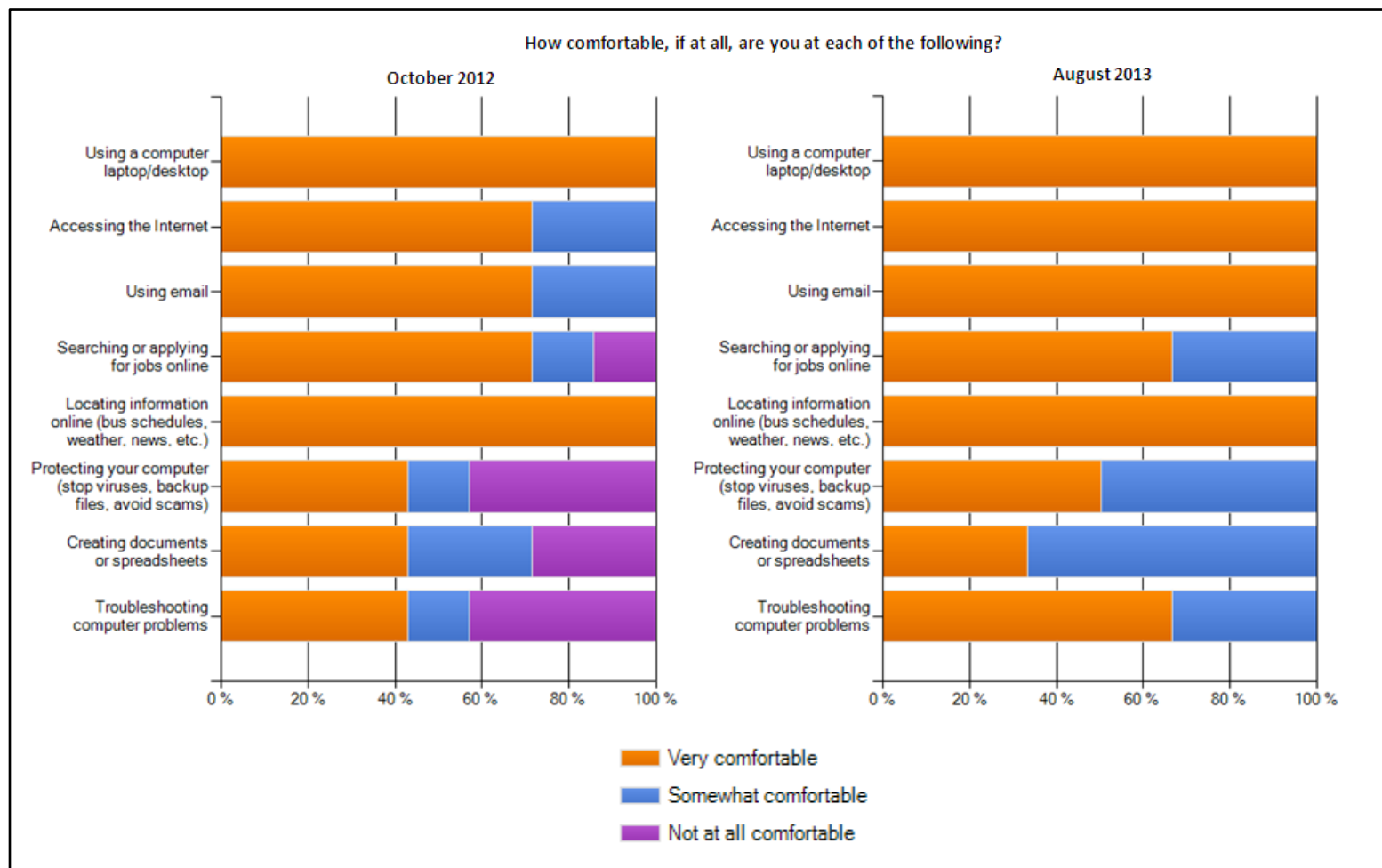
- Eight participants completed pre-tests (if participants didn't pass the basic skills module, they didn't proceed to take other pre-tests).
- Twenty-five Northstar Digital Literacy Assessments were successfully passed as part of the initial training program.
- Scores on the assessments improved significantly after the training.
- The most certificates were awarded for World Wide Web, Basic Computer Skills and email.
- Only two certificates were awarded for Microsoft Windows and two for Microsoft Word. No certificates were awarded for Microsoft Excel.

Participant Feedback

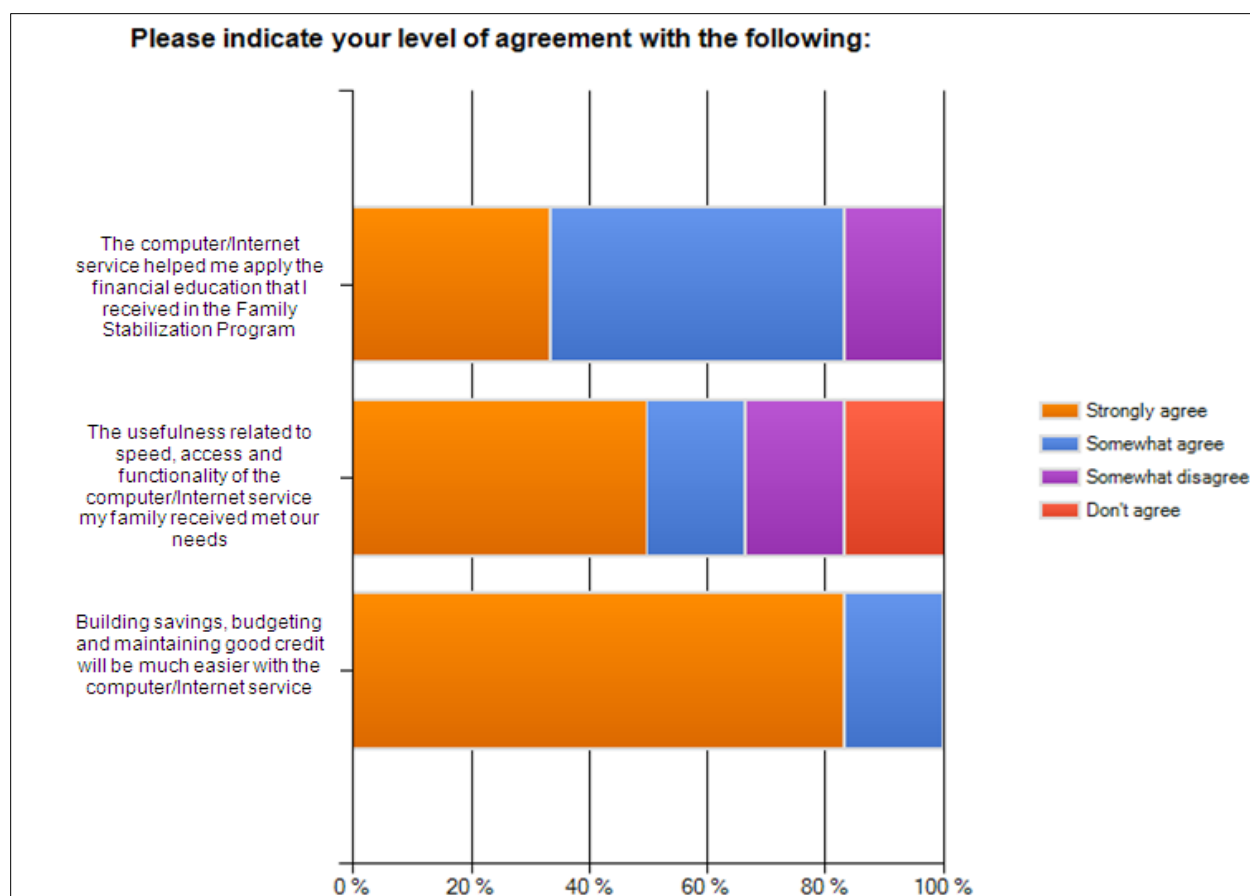
Families with Children: What would you like to share about how the computer and Internet was used by your children or as a family together?

- *I have a 7 year old daughter – it was amazing to see what she knows and how she knew where to go to find programs.*
- *I have an 11 year old and we don't watch TV in the summer. Now if she has a question, she can Google it to find answers to her questions*
- *I can keep up with my son's grades*
- *I can check her school work and email her teacher. If she has school work to do, she can do it right there at home. I can peek and see what she's doing instead of her going to the library.*
- *It helps with homework for all of us in school*

Comfort level with a variety of computer and Internet tasks either stayed the same at “Very comfortable” or improved for each skill area. The chart below shows how participant’s digital literacy skills changed between October 2012 and August 2013. Training occurred in September so some skill improvement was gained prior to the focus group, and skills improved over the year with experience.



Another demonstration of the participant’s digital literacy skills is that the majority of the participants completed the year-end program evaluation online using SurveyMonkey.



Applying technology and skills

Most respondents reported that the tools helped them with their financial goals. Participants reported the overall program helped them the most in the following areas:

- Money management skills, budgeting, saving, getting debt free
- Looking for work
- School, doing school work
- Finding resources and information needed as part of daily life
- Meeting goals – Improved communication and reminders
- Keeping up to date with emails about events and programs
- Using programs for building a new business

Technology challenges

Program participants reported issues about the speed of the Internet service and experienced some technical difficulties with the computers.

- PCs for People's recommendation was to bring the computer into their repair center, which was a challenge for participants who didn't have easy access to transportation.
- It's important to note that none of the participants chose to keep the USI Wireless service due to the slow speed of the basic level of service.

Summary of Recommendations

- Review training delivery options and establish a plan that allows for both structured/group training classes along with flexibility to accommodate participant's varying schedules.
- Distribute computers after a core set of training is completed and digital literacy assessments passed.
- Provide higher speed Internet (1 Mbps was not satisfactory for the participants)
- Provide more personalized technical support service, especially in the first 3 months after the computer distribution.
- Build in funding for food/beverages and incentives for participation in program events and follow up surveys.
- Capture true costs of the program (including in-kind)
- Engage Financial Coaches earlier in the program
- Align the Build Wealth Online Budgeting System with the overall program
- Establish a more structured data collection, communication and tracking system to accommodate an increase in the number of participants.

Appendices

Appendix A: Timeline and Computer Training Schedule

Timeline

Program development	June 2012
Computer and Internet preparation	July 2012
Launch event	August 9, 2012
Training and Northstar Digital Literacy Assessments	September – October 2012
Focus Group	October 27, 2012
Follow up from Focus Group	November 2012
Review of WorkForce Center opportunities	January 2013
End of year planning	June – July 2013
Program Celebration and Wrap Up	August 17, 2013

Computer Training Schedule

BAP Introduction, Digital Literacy Assessments / Computer Basics/ Gmail Basics. Facilitators Aaron and Kim	September 10, 5:30-7:30
Computer Maintenance, Facilitator: Pat	September 13, 5:30-7:30
Microsoft Word I, Katie	September 17, 5:30-7:30
Resume Writing, Facilitator: Kim	October 1, 5:30-7:30
Online Job Search, Facilitator: Kim	October 8, 5:30-7:30
Excel I, Facilitator: Katie	October 15, 5:30-7:30

Appendix B: Lessons Learned from the Team

- The key to successful communication with the program participants was their strong relationship with the Build Wealth team. David McGee, the Executive Director of Build Wealth Minnesota, and Regina McGee, Program Administrator were key contributors and helped the service providers build relationships with the families.
- The launch event went well; the families were excited and the City Council Members enjoyed participating.
- The equipment was shrink-wrapped together so participants had one unit to carry, in addition to the mouse and keyboard.
- Include an opportunity during the computer distribution event for participants to get hands-on experience with their computers.
- Increase readability of reference materials: the computer instruction handout was printed 6 slides to a page so was small to read.
- We activated the accounts with USI Wireless as a group in advance which streamlined the process for the team and provided a consistent start date for the Internet service for the program.
- Offer more personalized technical support. Communicate expectations around technical support and communication methods. Both parties had difficulty connecting with each other over the phone (i.e. voice mail, schedule/availability, after hours calls)
- Consider transportation assistance for participants to get to the computer refurbishing center if a repair is needed.
- The focus group in October and the wrap up session in August went well; we had good attendance and interaction at both. It worked well to offer incentives for participants to come to program events. Build Wealth provided a stipend to families who attended the focus group; the City provided lunch for the wrap up event.
- Provide a schedule of activities at the distribution event and allow more lead time for the program wrap up event and online program evaluation/survey.
- Incorporate use of email and SurveyMonkey for connecting with participants and for getting feedback about the program throughout the year.
- Participants were very candid in providing feedback at the wrap up event – it felt like we were all a team creating the program together.

Training:

- The training was highly valued by the participants. It worked well to have them come as a group together, good to have their support system.
- Spend more time at the first training session for the group to get to know each other.
- In some cases the pre-assessments were intimidating. Not everyone did all pre-assessments because if people didn't pass the basic module, they didn't keep going.
- Plan what would work best for the group for the pre-and post-assessments and certificates. The assessment and training process worked better when we adjusted the format to offer one pre-assessment for a module and cover the training for that module in the same session. That way a participant is only doing one assessment at a time, they

have time in class to learn and practice, and at the next session we reviewed material and then completed the post assessment.

- The participants liked getting the Northstar certificates when successfully completed each training module.
- Decide up front what data the trainers should collect and do sign in sheets to track attendance.
- Training Schedule – Monday evening was agreed to as best time, but still not full attendance at each class. It worked well to do reminder calls.
- Considering rescheduling some classes for people that missed.
- Move the computer maintenance class to later in the training schedule.
- Add more direct training from the WorkForce Center as part of the program. Set a schedule to deliver the WorkForce Center resource overview in person and incorporate the online tools into a classroom setting using computers.
- Leverage the Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment certificates as a recognition piece to celebrate achievements during the training classes.
- Set up a process to ensure all participants are able to pass the Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment for each module.

Appendix C: Program Design and Team

2012 Digital Inclusion Program – Pilot

Financial Stabilization and Employment Placement Assistance with Technology Access

Program Description

As part of the City of Minneapolis efforts to address employment disparities and the digital divide, the Civil Rights, Information Technology and Community Planning and Economic Development departments are teaming up with Build Wealth Minnesota to package computers, Internet access and training for families in Build Wealth Minnesota's Family Stabilization Plan.

Impact by Integration

The program uniquely integrates employment resources, financial skill-building and use of technology to improve quality of life.

- While 82% of City households overall have computers with Internet access, only 57% of Phillips and 65% of Near North residents have access at home. 25% of African Americans reported they don't have Internet access at home.
- Job postings, applications and employment resources have moved online. Employers need well-trained workers and jobs are requiring increasing levels of computer skills.
- The unemployment gap in Minneapolis is the worst in the country.

Build Wealth Minnesota's mission is to "Strengthen Underserved Communities by Empowering Families to Build Sustainable Social and Economic Wealth" and focuses on helping to change the mindset of communities facing challenges caused by current economic conditions and other factors that fuel poverty in our neighborhoods. Build Wealth provides counseling and support to families to help them reach their financial and employment goals.

Pilot Program Components

Build Wealth Minnesota

10 Families

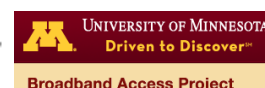
- Live in Minneapolis
- Unemployed / underemployed
- Actively / aggressively seeking employment
- Don't have computer/Internet at home
- Live in a residence capable to connect with USIW Internet service (not above 3rd story).

Build Wealth Counselors

- Personal connection, coaching and support
- Family goals and 6 month action plans
- Track progress and outcomes

Credit Builder Scholarship

- \$60 Financial commitment from families / Build Wealth



Computers from PCs for People

- Hardware: Computer, monitor, keyboard, mouse
- Software: Windows 7, OpenOffice, anti-virus and anti-malware (MS Security Essentials, Malware-bytes and CCleaner)
- 90 day warranty
- Technical support: up to 2 years free telephone support, \$25 repairs (St. Paul location)

Internet service using Wireless Minneapolis / USIW

- 12 months Internet service via USIW Trial Account Vouchers (up to 1Mbps download speed)
- Home service set up:
 - On-Site Service Installation
 - USIW Wireless Modem

Training

- Digital literacy skills
 - Provided in coordination with University of Minnesota Broadband Access Project
- Employment skills / tools
 - DEED / Positively Minnesota online employment placement tools
 - Participate in job placement program which includes job search tips, resume building, using social media in job search, etc.

Program Budget

Technology set up costs:

	Each
PCs from PCs for People	50.00
USIW Onsite Installation	34.95
USIW Modem	79.95

Package per family	\$ 164.90
For 10 families	\$ 1,649.00

Other considerations:

Printers
Ink
Mouse pads
Paper
Flash drives

Funding Plan

- Original estimate \$1600.00
- CPED - \$1000.00
- Build Wealth (credit/restoration program for trade line) - \$600.00
- USIW will donate modems if the older models will work in the families' homes.
- Build Wealth will be the central point for billing/payments.

Success Measures

Employment goals:

- If unemployed, were you able to get a job, and if so, did having a computer at home help you get a job?
- Did the program help you find a better job?
- Did the program help you do better at your current job?

Financial literacy goals:

- Did the program help you manage your income (personal finances, succeed in Build Wealth program goals)?

Digital literacy and Internet access goals:

- Did the program increase your computer / digital literacy skills? (proposing Pre-post using Northstar Digital Literacy Standards)
- How will you apply the technology and skills toward your goals?
- Are you able to maintain Internet service at home after the 12 months of USIW service?

Launch

Target: August 9, 2012

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Appendix D: News Release

Ten Minneapolis families get free computers, Internet access through pilot program

Ten Minneapolis families who currently don't have computer and Internet access at home will receive free computers, one year of free Internet access and computer training through a new digital equity pilot program in Minneapolis.

The new program is part of a partnership between the [City of Minneapolis](#), [Build Wealth Minnesota](#), [PCs for People](#), [USI Wireless](#), the [University of Minnesota Broadband Access Project](#), and the [Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development](#) that aims to bridge the digital divide and address the employment gap in the city. A recent City of Minneapolis [survey](#) found that while 82 percent of City households have computers with Internet access, only 57 percent of Phillips neighborhood residents and 65 percent of Near North residents have access at home. The survey also found that 25 percent of African Americans reported that they don't have Internet access at home.

The City of Minneapolis and Build Wealth Minnesota are providing the funding for this program while PCs for People is providing the hardware, software and technical support. Build Wealth Minnesota is also working with each of the 10 families on long-term personal development to establish goals and track progress. The computers are being provided at no-cost to the families for their participation in the year-long training program.

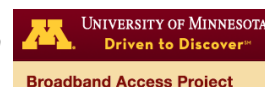
USI Wireless is donating 12 months of Internet service and the University of Minnesota Broadband Access Project is providing computer training and digital literacy skills to the program's participants. The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development will also help program participants learn how to use computers and the Internet to search for jobs and gain employment.

The 10 families who will participate in the pilot have already been identified, although additional funding may be possible in the future. To qualify for this program, the families needed to reside in Minneapolis, be currently unemployed or underemployed while actively seeking employment, not have computer/Internet access at home, and live in a residence capable of connecting with USI Wireless Internet service. Families who are interested in participating in this program in the future should contact Build Wealth Minnesota.

Published Aug. 8, 2012 <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/news/WCMS1P-096929>



pcsforpeople



Appendix E: Focus Group Report – October 2012

October 27, 2012, 1:30 pm at Build Wealth Minnesota

Eight Participants attended and completed surveys.

Family Questionnaire (Handout / paper survey)

Total of 8 Responses

1. It's been about 12 weeks since you received your computers. How much difference did having a computer and Internet at home have on your employment situation?

Please circle the response that fits best for you and provide comments.

Major improvement on my employment situation	Some improvement	A little bit of improvement	No improvement	Not Applicable
1	2	3	4	N/A
Number of responses <i>(families primarily responded in comments instead of circling an answer above)</i>				
2			1	

Comments / Please explain:

- Still don't have my Internet service. Excited, but not able to use it yet because my home is not suitable to receive the Wifi
- It's good I've been able to do all my homework, I will be looking for employment soon
- Yes now I have a job driving school bus
- It help me so much
- The program helped me so much!
- We have been able to do more job search. Search the various businesses of interest. Update our resumes. We have done business research, business plan writing

2. Did the program help you manage your income (personal finances, succeed in Build Wealth program goals)?

1 No 3 Yes If yes, how?

- Not yet still seeking the most cost effective route to go (for Internet service). I will have to invest out of pocket to be able to get it
- To track my spending
- We still work on it but it's better for insight
- Working on it
- I can pay more of my mind to how to save a lot better
- Yes, learning how to manage my money better

- Not yet, our income has not changed enough. I look forward to the management piece when our income improves

3. Do you find it necessary to have a computer and internet service to be more successful in Build Wealth's Family Stabilization program.

No 6 Yes If yes, why?

- In order to be stable yes it is necessary to see and be engaged on the budget daily, weekly and I need to computer connection to seek employment
- To see where my money is going
- Because you can email and start financial software and go back and forth
- Helpful in looking for better employment, and child's education
- Yes, I find it very necessary in me build a better foundation
- Because this is teaching me so very much
- We have done some housing search also. It helps to be able to use the computer at our convenience

4. What area of your family's program goals did the program help you in the most?

- In the future to update my resume and to write my business plan
- We pretty much know computer, so we're willing to learn whatever and to get reminded about different program
- Find a good job and some fun
- Looking for better employment
- Didn't know a lot about computer, but I know so much more now!
- Learning how to use the computer and all the apps, and how to use every part of the computer
- Business research and job search

5. Please check to indicate your level of agreement with the following:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Don't agree
The computer/internet service helped me apply the financial education that I received in the Family Stabilization Plan program	6	1		
The usefulness related to speed, access and functionality of the computer/internet service my family received to meets our needs	4	1		2
Building savings, budgeting and maintaining good credit will be much easier with the computer/internet service my family received	6	1		

- I would like to be in on the financial savings each month

6. How comfortable, if at all, are you at each of the following?

	Very comfortable	Somewhat comfortable	Not at all comfortable
Using a computer laptop/desktop	7		
Accessing the Internet	5	2	
Using email	5	2	
Searching or applying for jobs online	4	1	1
Locating information online (bus schedules, weather, news, etc.)	7		
Protecting your computer (stop viruses, backup files, avoid scams)	3	1	3
Creating documents or spreadsheets	3	2	2
Troubleshooting computer problems	3	1	3

Comments:

- I would like to have a part of the 9.99 savings that I can save towards a home.

7. What do you think about having a computer with Internet at home, compared to using a computer at a workforce center, library etc.?

- I need my privacy and accessibility to work my goals 24 hours
- Very comfortable
- Because sometimes going elsewhere is time consuming
- Good to walk in the door and have at home (?)
- A lot better
- Very much needed
- I love having the computer, don't have to leave home

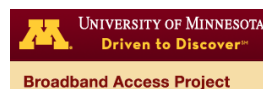
8. How do you think a program like this could help others? What suggestions do you have to help others in need?

- That it needs to be marketed more
- Because you still have a lot of families that are not compute savvy and it helps them learn and get motivated. Also it helps homework, work, programs.
- This is a good program and would help people who don't have a lot of computer skills.
- If people can take the time out and learn how to use the computer properly, then that is great.
- The program is great if you want to learn!

Thank you!

Appendix F: Year-End Survey Results

[Link to Year-End Survey Results](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/it/inclusion) at <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/it/inclusion>



Appendix G: Supplemental Materials

Link to [Supplemental Materials](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/it/inclusion) at <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/it/inclusion>

